IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claim 2 without prejudice to Applicants' right to pursue claim 2 in a continuing application.

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended): A process for preparing a 6-O-methylerythromycin A derivative represented by the formula:

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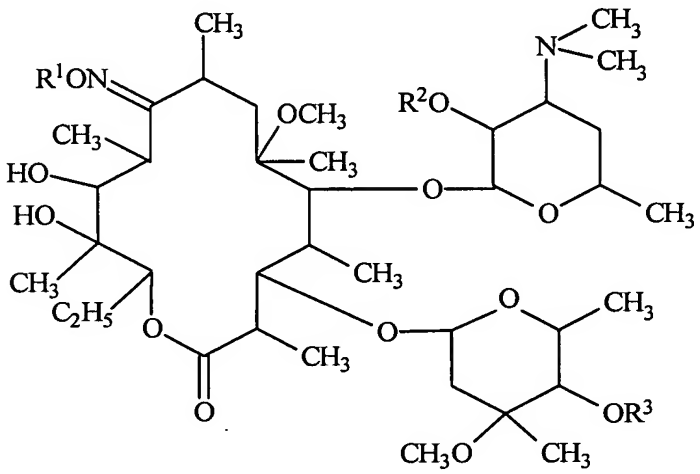

wherein R^1 is:

a 2-alkenyl group having 3 to 15 carbon atoms,

a benzyl group, or

a benzyl group [substitued] substituted by 1 to 3 of a chlorine atom, an alkoxy group having 1 to 4 carbon atoms, a nitro group or an alkoxycarbonyl group having 2 to 6 carbon atoms, and

R^2 and R^3 are trimethylsilyl,

which comprises reacting, in any desired sequence, erythromycin A 9-oxime with a compound of formula R^1—X (wherein R^1 is as defined above, and X is a halogen atom) and with a substituted silylating agent having an R^2 group to give a compound represented by the formula[;]:

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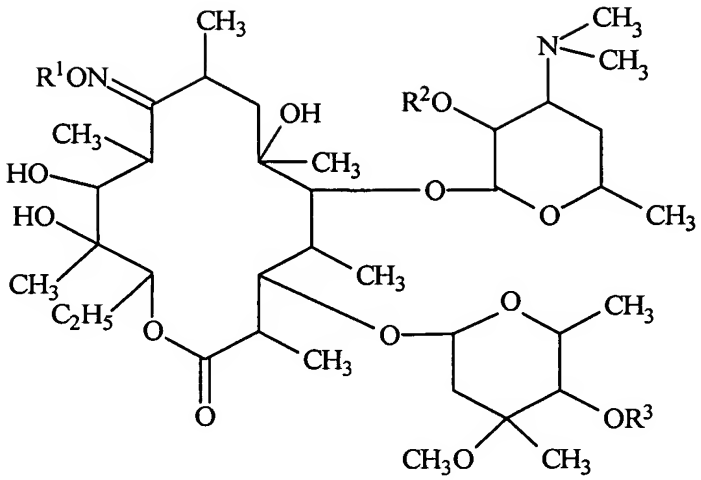

(wherein R^1, R^2 and R^3 are as defined above), and then reacting said compound of formula II with a methylating agent selected from the group consisting of methyl bromide, methyl iodide, dimethyl sulfate, methyl p-toluene sulfonate and methyl methane sulfonate, the amount of said methylating agent being 1-3 molar equivalents of said compound of formula II, said trimethylsilyl group (R^2) protecting the 2' hydroxyl group against methylation and preventing the 3'-dimethylamino group from being quaternized with the methylating agent.

3. (Amended): A process for preparing 6-O-methylerythromycin A comprising: reacting, in any desired sequence, erythromycin A 9-oxime with a compound of formula R^1—X (wherein R^1 is as defined below, and X is a halogen atom) and with a substituted silylating agent having an R^2 group to give a compound represented by the formula:

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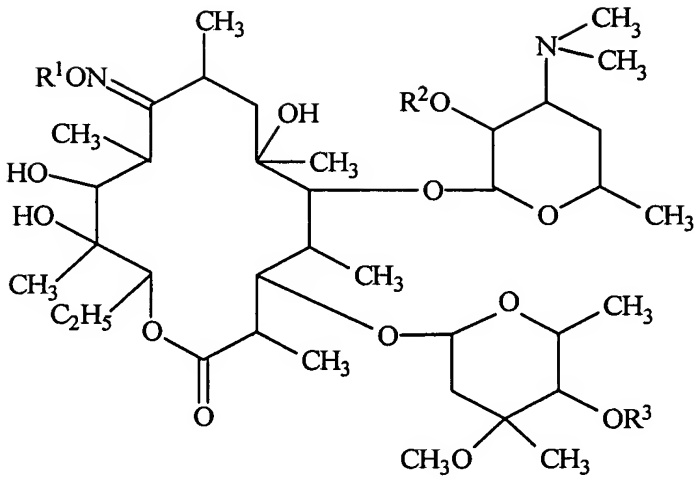

wherein R^1 is:

a 2-alkenyl group having 3 to 15 carbon atoms,

a benzyl group, or

a benzyl group substituted by 1 to 3 of a chlorine atom, an alkoxy group having 1 to 4 carbon atoms, a nitro group or an alkoxycarbonyl group having 2 to 6 carbon atoms, and

R^2 and R^3 are trimethylsilyl;

then reacting said compound of formula II with a methylating agent selected from the group consisting of methyl bromide, methyl iodide, dimethyl sulfate, methyl p-toluene sulfonate and methyl methane sulfonate, the amount of said methylating agent being 1-3 molar equivalents of said compound of formula II, said trimethylsilyl group (R^2) protecting the 2' hydroxyl group against methylation and preventing the 3'-dimethylamino group from being quaternized with the methylating agent;

then eliminating in any desired sequence the R^1, R^2, and R^3 groups, wherein the elimination of R^1 is performed by hydrogenolysis; and then, deoximating with a deoximating agent.

4. (Amended): A process for preparing 6-O-methylerythromycin A comprising: reacting, in any desired sequence, erythromycin A 9-oxime with a compound of formula R^1—X (wherein R^1 is as defined below, and X is a halogen atom) and with a substituted silylating agent having an R^2 group to give a compound represented by the formula:

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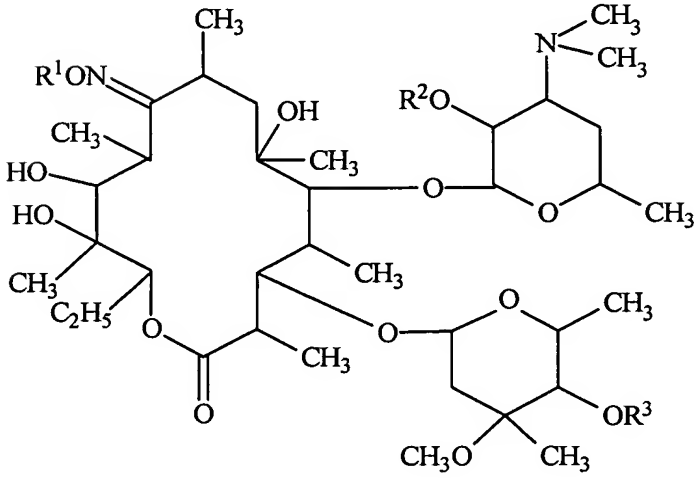

wherein R^1 is:

a 2-alkenyl group having 3 to 15 carbon atoms,

a benzyl group, or

a benzyl group substituted by 1 to 3 of a chlorine atom, an alkoxy group having 1 to 4 carbon atoms, a nitro group or an alkoxycarbonyl group having 2 to 6 carbon atoms, and

R^2 and R^3 are trimethylsilyl;

then reacting said compound of formula II with a methylating agent selected from the group consisting of methyl bromide, methyl iodide, dimethyl sulfate, methyl p-toluene sulfonate and methyl methane sulfonate, the amount of said methylating agent being 1-3 molar equivalents of said compound of formula II, said trimethylsilyl group (R^2) protecting the 2' hydroxyl group against methylation and preventing the 3'-dimethylamino group from being quaternized with the methylating agent;

eliminating in any desired sequence the R^1, R^2, and R^3 groups, wherein the elimination of R^2 and R^3 is performed by treatment with acid in an alcohol;

and then, deoximating with a deoximating agent.

5. (Amended): A process for preparing 6-O-methylerythromycin A comprising:

reacting, in any desired sequence, erythromycin A 9-oxime with a compound of formula R^1—X (wherein R^1 is as defined below, and X is a halogen atom) and with a substituted silylating agent having an R^2 group to give a compound represented by the formula:

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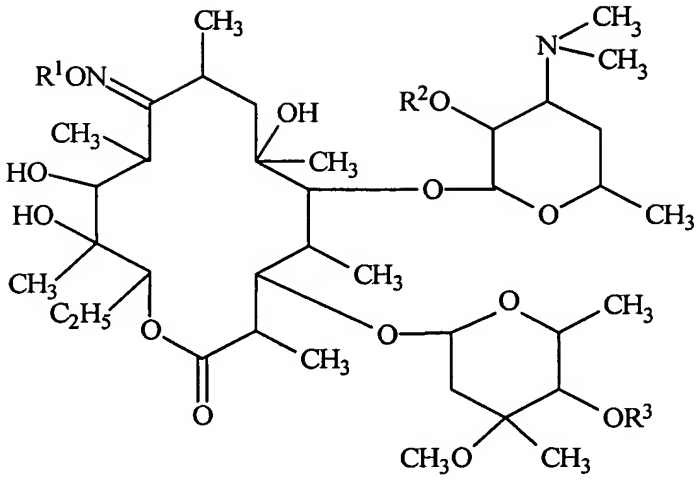

wherein R^1 is:

a 2-alkenyl group having 3 to 15 carbon atoms,

a benzyl group, or

a benzyl group substituted by 1 to 3 of a chlorine atom, an alkoxy group having 1 to 4 carbon atoms, a nitro group or an alkoxycarbonyl group having 2 to 6 carbon atoms, and

R^2 and R^3 are trimethylsilyl;

then reacting said compound of formula II with a methylating agent selected from the group consisting of methyl bromide, methyl iodide, dimethyl sulfate, methyl p-toluene sulfonate and methyl methane sulfonate, the amount of said methylating agent being 1-3 molar equivalents of said compound of formula II, said trimethylsilyl group (R^2) protecting the 2' hydroxyl group against methylation and preventing the 3'-dimethylamino group from being quaternized with the methylating agent;

eliminating in any desired sequence the R^1, R^2, and R^3 groups, wherein the elimination of R^2 and R^3 is performed by treatment with tetrabutyl ammoniumfluoride in tetrahydrofuran;

and then, deoximating with a deoximating agent.